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# Letter

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## The C.I.A. and Lumumba

I share Madeleine Kalb's fear of the "plausible deniability" made available to our elected leaders ("The C.I.A. and Lumumba," Aug. 2). I would go one step further in suggesting that much of the clearly illegal and immoral actions of such agencies as the C.I.A. are condoned by American citizens, as they retreat further from the pressing issues of the world at large.

We are not sufficiently aware of the consequences of our actions in terms of our worldwide friends and dependents. It is simply impossible to impose our first-world standards on third-world nations. Americans can no longer afford a myopic view of the political needs of others in the world. More importantly, we must be conscious of the ramifications of our behavior.

CAREN RABBINO  
Livingston, N.J.

To address Madeleine Kalb's first premise that the C.I.A. be shackled by microscopic examination by Congress and an array of committees prior to covert operations is utter nonsense. Granted we can remember times such as the Lumumba incident where the C.I.A. compromised the rights of other nations. I often wonder, though, how many times the C.I.A. has been successful in changing world situations to insure our inalienable rights and maintain the ideology fostered in the Constitution of the United States.

GEOFFREY H. GILL  
Providence, R.I.

On July 27, 1960, I covered the arrival of Patrice Lumumba at Washington's National Airport and his 30-minute news conference at the State Department.

At the time, I was television correspondent for United Press-Fox Movietone Newsreel, with 120 domestic television stations and 30 foreign networks. The State Department news conference was arranged following my request and that of the CBS correspondent assigned to the story. (The "regulars" on the beat were for the most part relaxing in between the political conventions of the Democrat and Republican Parties.)

Once word got around that Lumumba had agreed to meet with news reporters, several score came to the news conference. It was handled through an interpreter; Lumumba spoke in French.

Lumumba wanted to be known as his country's George Washington. He spoke to what

he undoubtedly assumed was entirely a United States audience. To characterize him clearly, he sounded like a Robert Kennedy. Also, he knew he stood to gain by playing the United States and the Soviet Union against one another.

My clients included two television outlets in Brussels and two in Paris to whom I directed the entire uncut version of the news conference.

European interests opposed to Lumumba might be characterized in today's terms as akin to those of Jesse Helms. Can anyone imagine the reaction of a Jesse Helms to the political ideology espoused by a Robert Kennedy?

It was obvious at the time that Lumumba was in for trouble. Whether the C.I.A., which undoubtedly had the transcript of Lumumba's State Department remarks, went ahead with any plot against him I leave for others to answer. If the C.I.A. did, however, it would have been a kind of "overkill," or a case of "get at the end of the line and wait your turn."

JOSEPH ACCARDO  
Arlington, Va.